The Intifada

A MESSAGE FROM THREE GENERATIONS OF PALESTINIANS

the intifada

For all the Palestinians
who have laid down their lives
in the nine months since December 8, 1987.
Their tombstones are the foundation of the
independent State of Palestine,
in whose memory they will live forever.

The Intifada

A MESSAGE FROM THREE GENERATIONS OF PALESTINIANS

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The photographs in this book were taken in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip between December 1987 and September 1988, courtesy of Sipa-Press, Gamma and Agence France Presse

Who are we?

We are the Palestinian people.
There are 5.5 million of us.
One million live on the West Bank of the River Jordan.
Six hundred and fifty thousand live in the Gaza Strip.
Seven hundred and fifty thousand live in Israel.
And the rest of us are scattered around the world.
We are a nation robbed of its country, a people stripped of their rights.
In the West Bank and Gaza Strip, we live under Israeli military occupation.
In Israel, we live as second-class citizens.
In the Arab countries bordering Israel, most of us live in refugee camps that make the slums of the Western world seem like affluent suburbs.

It was not always so.

We once had homes and gardens and farms and factories. They belonged to our fathers before us and their ancestors before them. They stretched from the River Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea, a Levantine homeland that we and the rest of the world called Palestine.

We had among us a handful of Jews with whom we lived in peace and equality, while the sweeping majority of the Jewish people suffered untold horrors at the hands of anti-Semitic powers around the world, culminating in the massacre of the Nazi holocaust.

The genocide added urgency to the Zionist movement's call for a Jewish state and gained it the support of a shocked and conscience-stricken world. The Jewish state, the Zionist movement said and the world agreed, should be in Palestine: "a land without a people for a people without a land."

Overnight, we were transformed into a non-people. Our country, held in trust by the British mandate, somehow became an uninhabited piece of real estate that the British authorities felt free to give away.

Thousands of Jewish immigrants swarmed to our shores, driving our defenseless people into neighboring countries (Lebanon, Syria, Jordan) and crowding them into the eastern and southern fringes of Palestine (the West Bank and the Gaza Strip).

In 1948, our homes and gardens and farms and factories became theirs, and they called them Israel.

For almost 20 years we huddled in our refugee camps, waiting for the world that had taken pity on the Jews to take pity on us. Instead of pity, we were given more oppression. In 1967, the Israeli army overran the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the last two slivers of Palestine, and instituted a military dictatorship in them. Where we once had misery and poverty, we now also had tyranny.

In the 20 years that have passed since then, we have tried everything in our power to get the world to recognize our humanity and give us the rights that human beings everywhere have.

We have proposed that the land of Palestine become a democratic state in which Arabs and Jews share equal rights. For that we have been accused of trying to destroy Israel and drive the Jews into the sea.

We have proposed that we be given a state of our own in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. For that we have been accused of trying to plant a Sparta in the Middle East that would ultimately threaten the existence of Israel and the stability of other states in the region.

We have taken up arms against the occupation of our land and waged a global war for the recovery of our rights. For that some have branded us terrorists, our camps have been bombarded, our women and children massacred, and our leaders assassinated.

In 1985, we announced an end to all acts of Palestinian violence around the world and began to concentrate our freedom fight in Israel and the Palestinian lands it occupied. But instead of seeing us as freedom-fighters, some in the West have called us criminals, and it has been open season on our people, who have been murdered in their tents, tortured in their cells, and hunted in their exile.

For 40 years we have sought justice and found affliction. We have offered Israel olive branches and Israel has responded with cluster bombs. We have asked the world for our national rights and the world has given us UN resolutions. We have used pleas, reason and arms to jolt the West into the realization that by supporting Israel in these circumstances it is condemning an entire nation to death, and the West has responded with more support for Israel.

In 1974, the leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization went to the United Nations carrying an olive branch and a pistol. He told the world that year that his people wanted their rights and would prefer to obtain them with the olive branch but were ready to use the gun if they found they had no other choice.

Since then, you have heard our people proposing peace in the capitals of the world.

You have heard our guns speak around the globe.

Now hear all 5.5 million of us speak with one voice.

Listen to the *intifada*.

What is the Intifada ?

It is our belated realization that neither Israel nor its supporters have the slightest intention of giving us our rights.

It is our decision to live free or die trying.

It is a message from us to Israel, and through Israel to the United States and the rest of the world.

It reads as follows:

We will no longer be a subject people.

If you order us to disperse, we will assemble.
Shoot us if you will.

If you confine us to our camps, we will roam the countryside.
Dig up our soil and bury us alive in it if you will.

If you direct us to work in your factories, we will confine ourselves to our homes.
Herd us into your concentration camps if you will.

If you instruct us to buy your produce and your products, we will grow and make our own.
Destroy our houses and our gardens if you will.

If you demand taxes from us, we will give you nothing.
Lob tear-gas grenades into our huts if you will.

If you rule that we must carry identity cards, we will carry Palestinian flags.
Cut off our water supply and starve us if you will.

Whatever law you pass we will break, whatever demand you make we will ignore, whatever action you prohibit we will undertake.

Bring out your clubs and steel pipes and break our bones if you will.

When one of us falls, ten will take his place.

Drag ten of us to your jails and you will find a hundred waiting for you when you return.

Break twenty arms, and a storm of stones thrown by a townful of healthy arms will explode around you.

When your bullets make us childless we will adopt the children you have orphaned.

Starve us and we will return to our roots and berries, seal our wells and we will sip the dew, raze our homes and we will live in caves.

You have nothing to gain but our hatred, and our hatred can be costly.

We have nothing to lose but our life, and if this is the life we are destined to have, we offer it gladly.

The message is signed by every Palestinian in the Occupied Territories, Israel and the Diaspora.

But it is in our Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip that the uprising started and is swelling. It is there that we will gain our freedom or become the victims of the twentieth century's second holocaust, because nothing short of our rights will satisfy us and nothing short of genocide will stop us.

How did it start?

December 8, 1987.

A group of Palestinians are being driven back to their Gaza homes from their jobs in Israel.

An Israeli army truck approaches, speeds up, rams the workers' vehicle.

Eyewitnesses say it is premeditated murder. Some swear that the soldier in the army truck got out and opened fire at the Gaza workers at point-blank range.

The Israeli authorities, initially silent, later insist it is an accident.

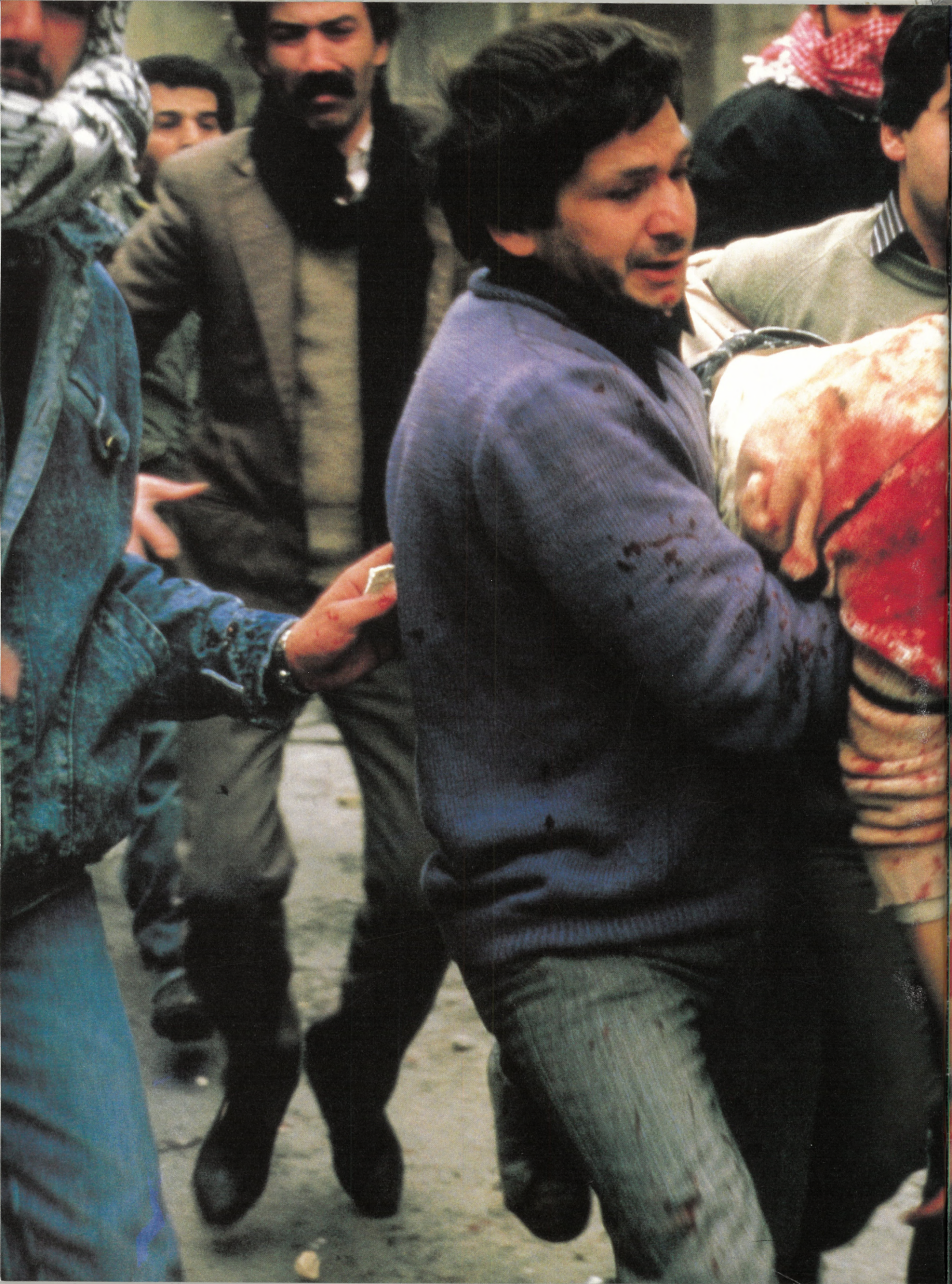
Crime or accident, it claims four Palestinian lives and leaves nine injured.

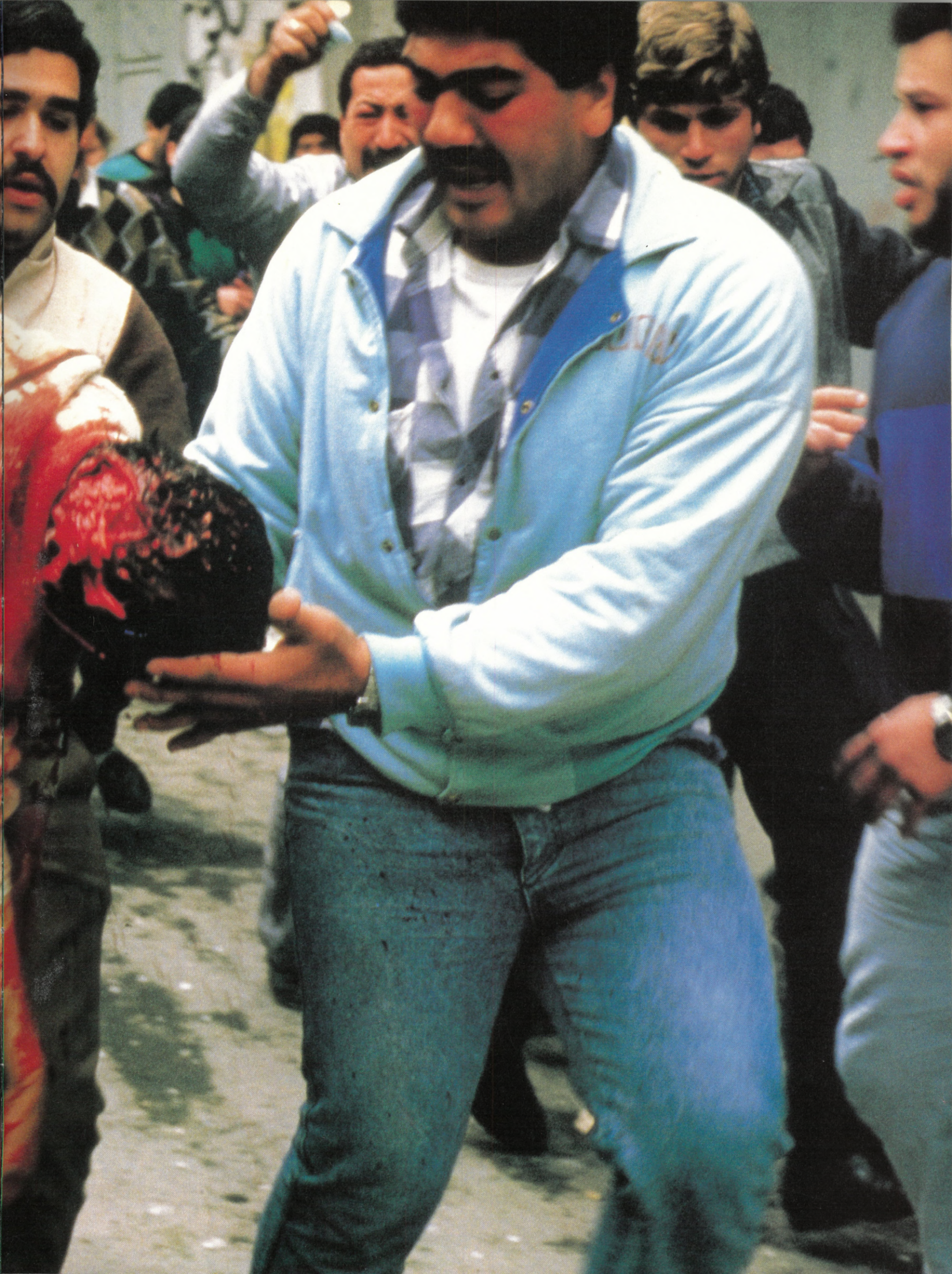
Gaza simmers.

Around 3,000 angry mourners show up for the funerals the next day. Israeli troops rush to the scene, surround the crowd, try to disperse it. Stones are thrown at the soldiers, who open fire. Two Palestinians die, 30 are wounded.

News of the confrontation spreads throughout Gaza and into the West Bank. Rage spreads with it. Marches are organized. Israeli troops are defied. More shots are fired. More stones are thrown.

The *intifada* has started.





So the Palestinians' national uprising was unleashed by one collision, four deaths and nine injuries.

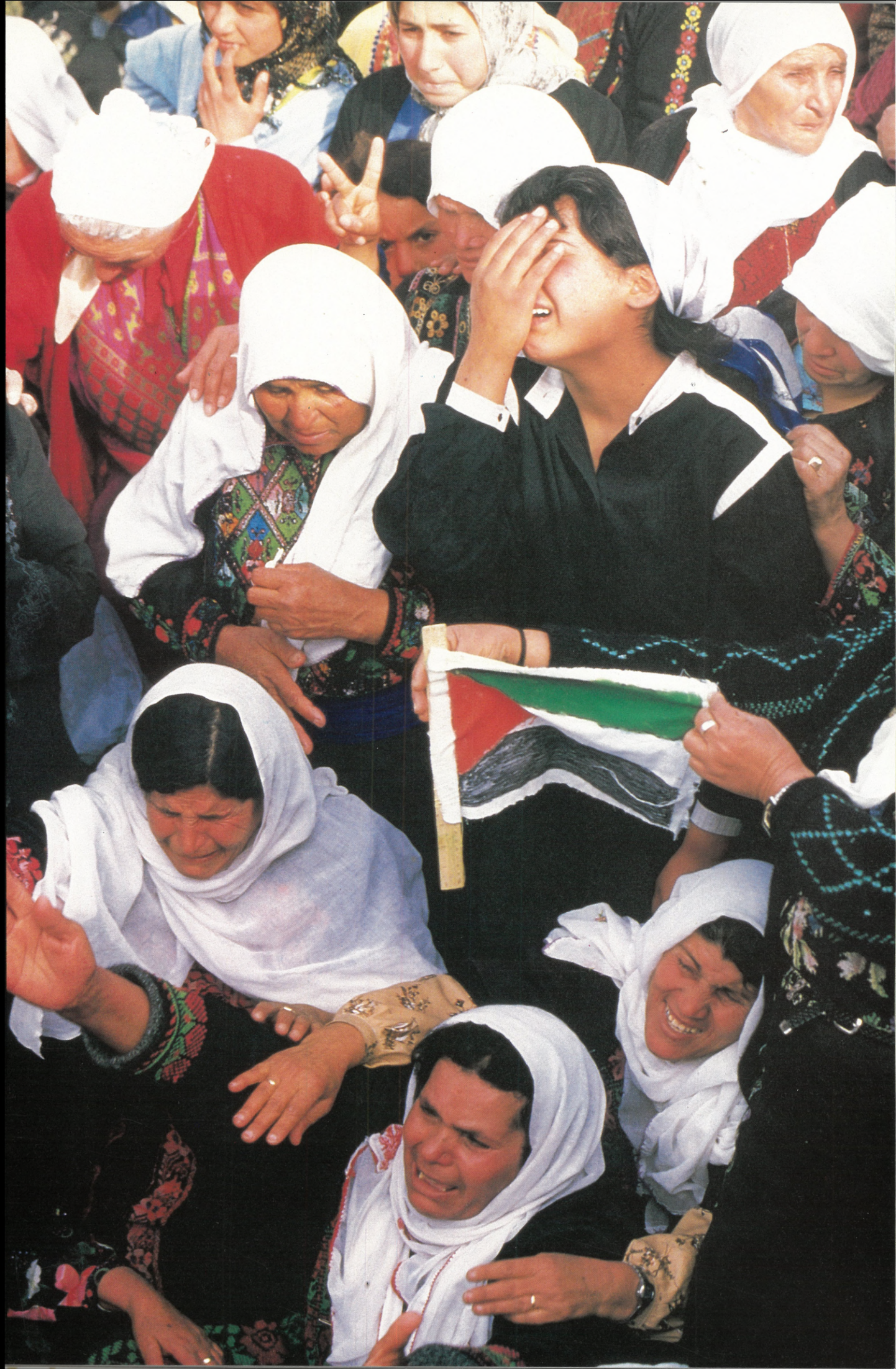
Or was it?

Hundreds of Palestinians had died at the hands of Israeli soldiers and civilians over the years. Thousands had been maimed, injured, jailed, tortured, expelled from their homeland, made to watch as their homes were demolished.

In the first nine months of 1987 alone, 17 Palestinians had been deliberately murdered, 129 had suffered serious injury, seven had been expelled, 77 had been placed under "administrative detention" (Israelese for imprisonment without trial), and 48 had been placed under "town arrest" (prohibited from leaving their cities, villages or camps). In those same nine months, the Israelis had also demolished or sealed 86 Palestinian homes, closed 48 Palestinian institutions, and imposed 50 curfews.

All of this had stoked Palestinian anger, triggered a demonstration here, a stone-throwing paroxysm there. But none of it had provoked the frenzy of rage that one collision, four deaths and nine injuries sparked.

Why?



The fact is that by December, 1987, a Palestinian boy slipping on an Israeli banana peel could have started the uprising.

The dam that held back 40 years of Palestinian pain, sorrow and wrath was bulging with the strain. Its groans could be heard by anyone willing to listen. Many heard them, and some issued urgent warnings.

One warning came from Lord Winchilsea, a prominent member of the British Liberal Party, who led a fact-finding delegation to the Israeli-occupied territories that December and returned home to report "compelling evidence of a rapid slide toward an uncontrollable and violent confrontation between the unarmed inhabitants of the territories and the Israeli occupation forces."

In a letter to British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, Lord Winchilsea conveyed, "with the utmost urgency, pleas made to me by ambassadors, senior UN staff, and other European and American residents in the area for immediate action to prevent a human catastrophe on a scale that will dwarf Sabra and Shatila," the two Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut, Lebanon, where hundreds of Palestinian women and children were massacred by Israeli-backed Lebanese militiamen in 1982.

Lord Winchilsea told Mrs. Thatcher about "an intensifying despair on the part of the occupied people, based on a perception that their plight is being forgotten, even as those basic rights conferred on all human beings by the UN Charter are being more and more seriously eroded by the occupying military forces, and by Israeli administrative regulations and laws."

He spoke of a Palestinian "lack of faith, based on 40 years of failure, that any of the current external efforts will achieve a political solution," and warned that "the likely outcome, according to our informants and our own findings, is some form of unarmed civilian uprising by the people of the occupied zones, leading to massive loss of life and a forced exodus into other areas."

When Lord Winchilsea spoke of the erosion of the Palestinians' basic rights by the Israeli military occupation, he was not referring only to the uninvestigated murder of Palestinians, their arrest without charges, their torture under "questioning," the demolition of their homes, and their expulsion from their homeland.

All these were the daily rations of the Palestinians, the hallmark of life under Israeli military rule, but they were the symptoms of the problem, not the core of it. They were meant to deter protest, stifle opposition, crush the slightest challenge to Israel's West Bank and Gaza program, and that program was the problem.

It was a program of creeping annexation that was devouring the land and resources of the West Bank and Gaza, leaving no doubt in the Palestinians' mind that their occupiers meant to sling their international borders around what was left of Palestine and leave the Palestinian people permanently homeless.

Israeli talk of peace and expressions of anguish over the Arabs' refusal to negotiate -- even as the Arabs were presenting the world with one peace plan after another -- was the stuff of international diplomacy, carefully crafted to give the world a pretext to look the other way and give the Jewish state time to ingest the territories.

By December, 1987, 80,000 Israelis had taken up residence in Arab East Jerusalem, which the Jewish state, in defiance of international law and protests, had annexed in 1967.

In addition:

-- 120 Jewish settlements have been built in the West Bank, and 65,000 Israelis had rushed into them, declaring the land theirs. In Gaza, 2,500 Israelis have set up 21 settlements. The settlers in both territories are heavily armed and authorized by the Israeli occupation authorities to open fire on any Palestinian they perceive to pose a potential threat to them or their interests -- an authorization that the settlers have made full use of, as the Palestinian cemeteries attest.

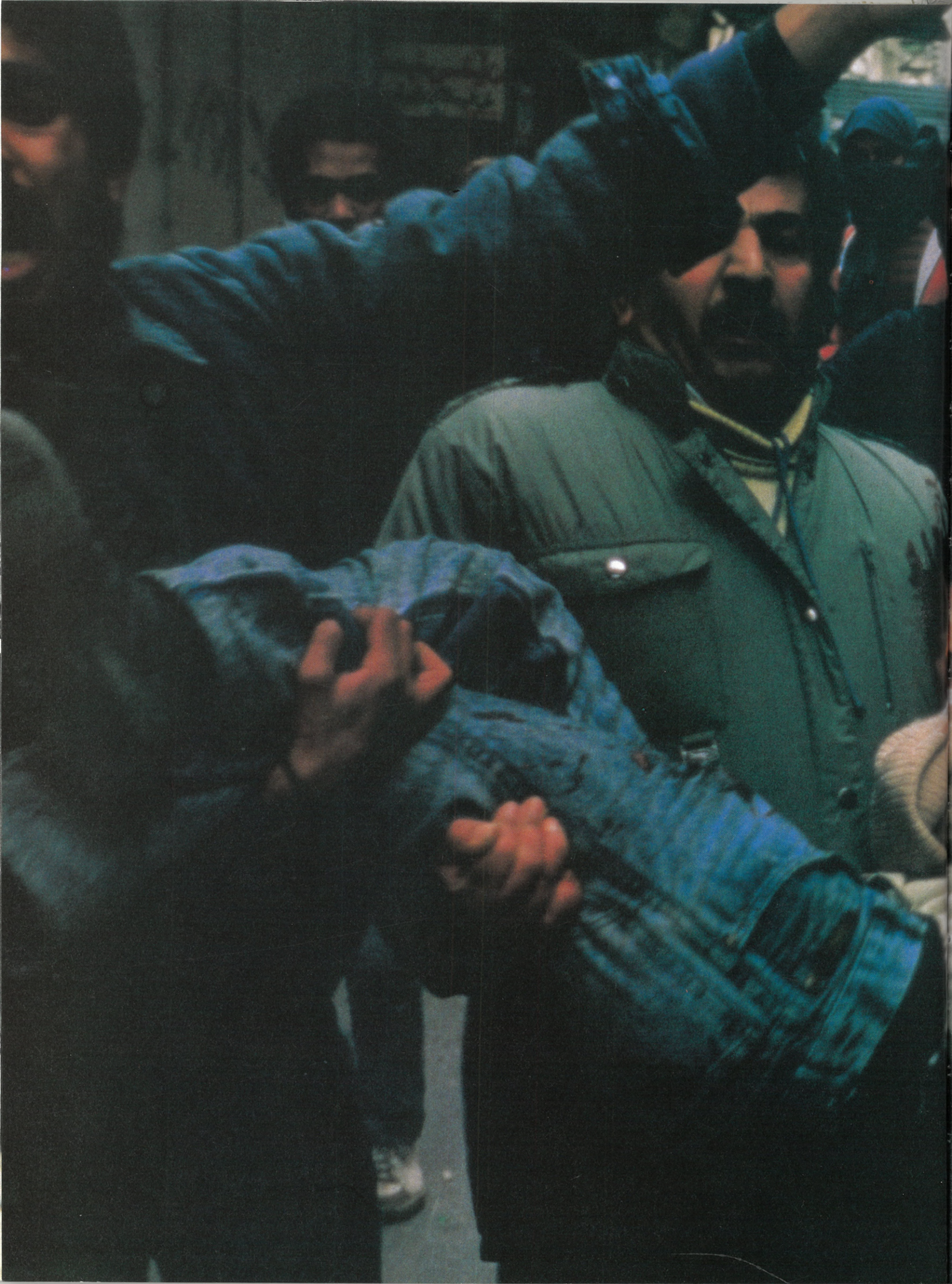
-- 50 percent of the total area of the West Bank, 63 percent of its cultivated land, has been expropriated by Israel on a variety of pretexts. The same pretexts have been used to seize 40 percent of the total area of the Gaza Strip, 65 percent of its cultivated land. And the process is continuing, crowding the burgeoning Palestinian population into a steadily shrinking area.

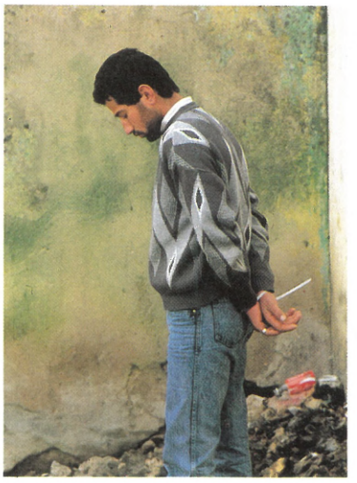
-- The water resources of the West Bank and Gaza have been taken over by the Israelis, who are manipulating them to choke off Palestinian agriculture and make the settlers' farms the major producers of the Occupied Territories. Water meters have been installed on Palestinian wells and a rigid quota system has been imposed on Palestinian water consumption, with heavy fines decreed against any Palestinian who exceeds his limit or drills an alternative well. In the Gaza Strip, the 2,500 Jewish settlers, representing 0.3 percent of the area's population, are now getting 30 percent of the area's water resources. Arab land has been drying up, and its lack of cultivation has been declared by the Israeli occupation authorities sufficient reason to take possession of it.

-- Palestinian industries and services have been the target of stringent controls. Many have been closed down, the growth of the rest has been restricted, and licenses to launch new enterprises have been made virtually impossible to obtain. The Palestinians' control of their own drinking water, power supply and medical institutions has been halted, and Israel has all but taken over the three vital services, which it is rationing to make life in the Occupied Territories as difficult as possible. In addition, export of Palestinian products and produce has come under increasingly rigid restrictions, with sale of goods in Israel largely prohibited and the flow of merchandise to overseas markets routed through a maze of military and administrative checks that have slowed it to a trickle.

-- With their fields being rolled up around them and their businesses being badgered into bankruptcy, tens of thousands of Palestinians have found themselves with no means of livelihood, forced to choose between two options: employment in Israel and emigration. Those who choose to emigrate find the Israelis ready to bankroll the move, and whatever real estate they leave behind is immediately confiscated under an Israeli law that makes expropriation of "absentee landlords' property" unchallengeable. Those who decide to work in Israel are given non-skilled or semi-skilled labor at slave wages, out of which a sizable chunk is taken in income tax. Neither this income tax nor the income and sales taxes illegally levied in the Occupied Territories find their way back to the Palestinians. The bulk of the money goes into a fund to further develop and expand Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, thus increasing the pressure on the Palestinians and reinforcing their urge to seek relief in exile or accept the pittance Israeli employers offer them.

It is this inexorable annexation campaign, disguised by the Israeli leaders' protestations of peaceful intentions, that is the core of the problem. It has been fueling Palestinian fear and fury since 1967, when the people of the West Bank saw Israel claim their most precious possession, the holy city of Jerusalem, and heard the world content itself with a disapproving chorus of tongue-clucking.





The Palestinians' fear and fury have been amplified, as Lord Winchilsea noted, by their "perception that their plight is being forgotten."

That perception is based on 20 years of international inaction interrupted, whenever the situation heated up, by a cold shower of UN resolutions and Arab or American peace plans that quickly flowed down the drain.

Suspicion of international indifference hardened into certainty in the 1980's, when five regional and international developments confirmed it:

June, 1982: Israel launched an all-out invasion of Lebanon in an attempt to wipe out the Palestinians in that country. Cluster bombs, gas bombs, napalm and a variety of other American weapons designed to kill a maximum number of personnel rained onto the Palestinian refugee camps. Men, women and children died horrible deaths. The carnage continued for three months. In August, the Palestine Liberation Organization, accepting international guarantees that the Israelis would be kept out of the Lebanese capital and that Palestinian civilians in that city would be protected, agreed to evacuate Beirut. Days after they left, the Israelis entered Beirut and allowed their "Lebanese Forces" allies to move into the Palestinian refugee camps, which were now inhabited by unarmed elderly men, women and children. Over two mid-September nights, at least 800 Palestinian grandparents, mothers and children -- later to be called "cockroaches" and "grasshoppers" by Israeli leaders -- were massacred as the rest of the world watched.

The Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza and the rest of the world also watched. They saw and understood: Their people's lives meant little to humanity, and their people's rights meant less. If they were to survive, they had to take matters into their own hands.

May, 1985: As Israel continued its decimation of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, a vicious attack was launched on Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut and Tyre. Lebanese militiamen backed by Syria surrounded the camps and bombarded them for 32 months. Homes and hospitals were not spared. No food was allowed in. No one was allowed out. Medical supplies were barred. Starvation, infection and disease ran rampant as missiles poured in and the world averted its eyes.

Since then, the Beirut camps bloodbath has been reenacted on several occasions by the proxies of the same people in the same place, accompanied by the same international apathy.

April, 1987: Thirteen years after Arab leaders had declared the Palestine Liberation Organization the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, a tentative bilateral agreement was reached on the general guidelines for the future of the West Bank and Gaza.

The agreement, later to be called "the London paper," was arrived at with no reference to us or our leaders. Once more, we were regarded as nonentities whose rights and fate depended on the whims of others.

November, 1987: An Arab summit conference was held in Amman, Jordan. A stream of messages flowed from the people of the West Bank and Gaza to that gathering, appealing to the Arab chiefs of state to take concrete action to deliver us from our plight. Instead, the Arab chiefs of state dismissed the Palestinian issue with a casual resolution, and omitted from their final communiqué any support for the principle of independent Palestinian statehood.

December, 1987: The superpower summit was held in Washington. Once again, the Palestinians strained for international attention. West Bank and Gaza leaders sent a memorandum to U.S. President Ronald Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev drawing their attention to the fact that "the Palestinian people are suffering daily from the Israeli occupation of their territory, the expropriation of their land, the establishment of settlements, and their displacement and oppression by Israel." Four hundred Palestinian children cowering in their refugee camps in South Lebanon sent another message to the two leaders: "We, the children of Palestine, live in camps that have been destroyed by the latest kinds of weapons," they wrote, "but we still long to return home and live in peace and freedom like all the other children of the world." The Washington superpower summit did not discuss the Palestinian problem and had nothing to say about it in its final communiqué.

If the world heard, it did not understand. If it understood, it did not care.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
ولا تحسبن الذين قتلوا في سبيل الله
أمواتا أحياء عند ربهم يرزقون
الفاتحة
هذا ضريح الشهيد
حسن مصطفى معالي
الذي نال شرف الشهادة
على ثرى فلسطين
بتاريخ ٢٤/٥/١٤٠٨هـ
الموافق ١٣/١/١٩٨٨م
والتي زفته جماهير شعبنا
كوكبة للانتفاضة

The collision that started the Palestinian uprising was not between a truck and a car but between a promise and a threat -- the promise in the UN Charter that all peoples shall have their basic human rights, and the threat in over 20 years of Israeli plunder and global oblivion that the Palestinian people will be the exception.

The collision broke the dam, and two decades of Palestinian despair eddied out to become the *intifada*.

Who are our fighters?

Some of our soldiers, bowed with age, are barely able to stand.

Others, just out of the crib, have barely learned to walk.

Ours is an army of grandparents, parents and children -- three generations ready to die for their freedom and the freedom of generations to come.

We have no tanks and we carry no guns. Our weapons are whatever courage we can pull out of our despair and whatever stones we can gather from the land we are fighting for.

Meet some of our troops:

Private Najwa Hassan al-Masri. *She was 17 years old. Her weapons were her legs. She marched in a demonstration in Beit Hanoun on December 15, 1987, demanding Palestinian rights. She was shot and killed.*

At this writing, over 300 Palestinians of both sexes and all ages have been killed by Israeli settlers and troops.

Private Jamil Shakkoura. *He is four years old. His weapon was a stone. He threw it at Israeli soldiers using firearms to break up a demonstration in Gaza on June 2, 1988. He was captured and dragged to jail with his friends.*

Over 10,000 Palestinians are crowded, dozens to a cell or tent, in Israeli jails and concentration camps, nearly 3,000 of them brought there with no charges and no prospects of a trial. Their daily fare is thirst, hunger and a variety of ailments brought on by unsanitary conditions, rough treatment, their weakened state and the inaccessibility of medical attention.

Khalil Hassan Saadeh. *He was 70 years old. His weapon was his faith. On December 18, 1987, he went into Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque to pray for an end to his people's suffering. He died of asphyxiation when Israeli soldiers lobbed tear-gas grenades into the temple.*

Israeli soldiers, who have vandalized mosques and killed and maimed worshipers all over the Occupied Territories, have thrown tear-gas grenades and canisters into homes and hospitals despite international warnings that the "harmless gas" can be lethal in confined quarters. In May, 1988, UN doctors and officials estimated that Israel's use of tear-gas had caused 1,200 injuries, 11 deaths and "dozens of miscarriages." That same month, the American manufacturer of the tear-gas Israel was using, bombarded by daily reports of deaths and injuries caused by its product, announced that it was suspending shipments to the Jewish state. But the gas attacks continued, and on June 23, 1988, Amnesty International formally demanded an Israeli investigation of more than 40 tear-gas related deaths, including the death of 18 babies under six months and 17 adults aged 50 or over.

Amnesty International expressed concern about reports that "tear-gas containers have been deliberately thrown or fired by Israeli soldiers into people's homes, health clinics, schools or mosques, even though they are only meant to be used outdoors. The gas has sometimes been used as a punitive measure against residents of villages or refugee camps who had clashed with the Israeli army earlier in the day. It has been used when Israeli soldiers have been pursuing demonstrators, often when they have taken refuge in hospitals or near people's homes. There has been at least one instance in which an individual was deliberately shut in a room which was then sprayed with tear-gas."

Amnesty International's demand was ignored by the Israeli government.

Private Adel Beshir Mahmoud Nafe'. *He is 27 years old. His weapon is his leadership qualities. He organized a youth movement, "al-Shabiba," in the Kalandia refugee camp north of Jerusalem. For that crime, he was sentenced to deportation in January, 1988.*

The Geneva Convention prohibits the deportation of any member of the population of an occupied territory regardless of the circumstances. Since 1967, Israel has deported 2,500 Palestinians and disregarded international protests, which soon died down.

Private Omar Jayyasi. *He is 21 years old. His weapon is his voice. He was shouting out Palestinian demands in a demonstration in the West Bank town of Tulkarem on February 2, 1988, when an Israeli soldier shot him in the face with a rubber bullet. He lost one eye.*

Other eyes were to follow. On May 30, nine-month-old Huda Massoud was hit by a rubber bullet in the Jabalya refugee camp. Her eye had to be removed. On June 6, in the same camp, a rubber bullet claimed the eye of Feda Samir al-Sharafi, who was also nine months old.

Thousands of broken bones and internal injuries have been reported in the Occupied Territories since December, 1987, many caused by rubber bullets, others by live ammunition and beatings. By July, 1988, available figures indicated that 13,000 Palestinians had sustained a range of injuries, and that of these, 3,700 had been permanently disabled as a result.

Private Iyad Akl. *He was 17 years old. His weapon was his will. He observed a strike called by the leaders of the* ***intifada*** *in early February, 1988. On February 7, Israeli soldiers forced their way into his home in the Gaza refugee camp of Bureij, dragged him out, attacked him with clubs and steel pipes and left him bleeding to death in the street.*

Strikes have been one of the most potent of the Palestinians' weapons, and beatings have been one of the Israelis' most brutal responses.

Israel, while restricting Palestinian industry and agriculture and prohibiting the sale of Palestinian goods in its territory, has been dumping its own produce and products into the West Bank and Gaza, which have been paying around $1 billion a year for Israeli merchandise. This has kept the Occupied Territories dependent on Israel and created an Israeli trade surplus with the Palestinians of close to $1 billion, helping it offset its huge trade deficit with the rest of the world. Palestinian strikes have disrupted this neat arrangement. Sale of Israeli goods has plummeted, along with the income and sales taxes Israel has been imposing on the Palestinians in defiance of international law.

The strikes have also kept the estimated 185,000 Palestinians who had been coerced into low-paying jobs in Israel away from their work, slashing industrial and agricultural production in the Jewish state.

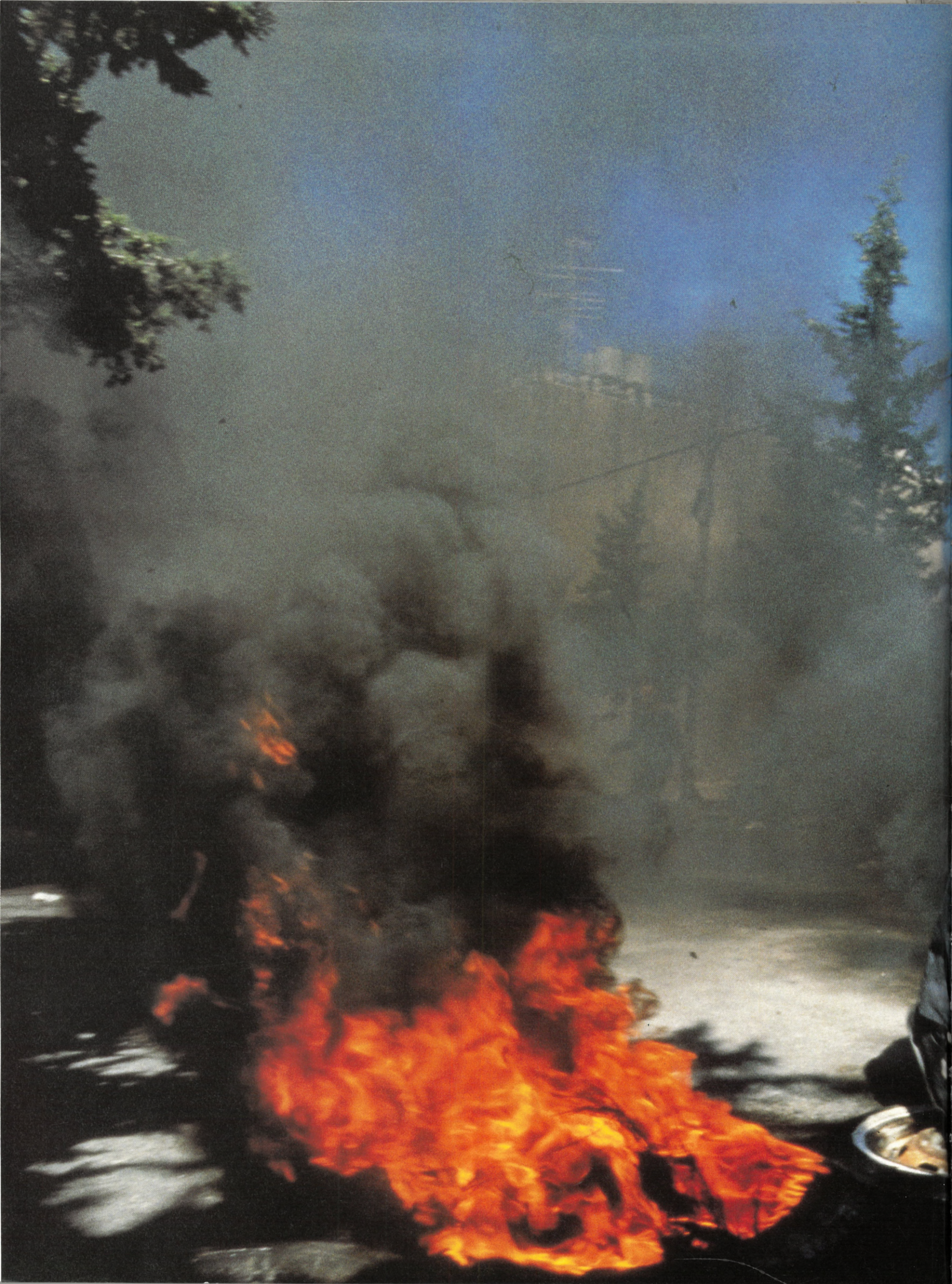
فتح
فتح

The Israelis have been using clubs and steel pipes to pound the Palestinians into submission since 1967, but it was not until January 20, 1988 that Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin announced to the world that he had adopted the "humane" policy of "might, power and beatings" to reduce Palestinian casualties. Within three days of the announcement, hospitals reported that 200 people had been admitted with broken bones, and by February 12 an American medical delegation representing Physicians for Human Rights was announcing in a press conference that they had evidence that 4,000 Palestinians had sustained a range of serious injuries from beatings. Thousands more have followed since then. The first to be beaten to death was 14-year-old Rami Abderrahim al-Aklouk, a resident of the Gaza Strip's Deir el-Balah. He was beaten on February 6 and succumbed the next morning. How many have been bludgeoned to death since then is anybody's guess: after these first two fatalities, and a series of deaths and miscarriages from exposure to tear-gas, the Israeli authorities prohibited any mention of beatings or tear-gas in death certificates and medical reports.

Private Nasrallah Abdelkader Nasrallah. *He was 12 years old, a resident of the Tulkarem refugee camp in the West Bank. His weapon was defiance. On February 20, 1988, he stepped out of his house despite an Israeli-imposed curfew. His age did not protect him. Israeli soldiers opened fire. He died on the spot.*

Curfews and "military sieges" have been among the Israelis' favorite *intifada*-busters. For days, sometimes weeks, entire districts would be placed under curfew or blockaded by hundreds of troops. No food would be allowed in. Other supplies would also be barred. Mothers who ventured out to forage for food for their families would be stopped and beaten. If they had food, it would be thrown on the ground and trampled. In many cases, troops would storm homes, empty refrigerators and leave families without a scrap to eat.

Attempts to starve the spirit out of the Palestinians have also been expanded to make them feel they are alone in the world. Travel within the Occupied Territories has been banned with increasing frequency. Fuel supplies have been choked off. Internal telephone communications have been interrupted and telephone links with the outside world have been cut.



Private Zuheir al-Ajeh. *He was the Israeli-appointed* ***mukhtar****, or village headman, of the Palestinian refugee camp of Am'ari near the West Bank town of el-Bireh. His weapon was his post. On March 4, 1988, in response to his people's demand, he submitted his resignation.*

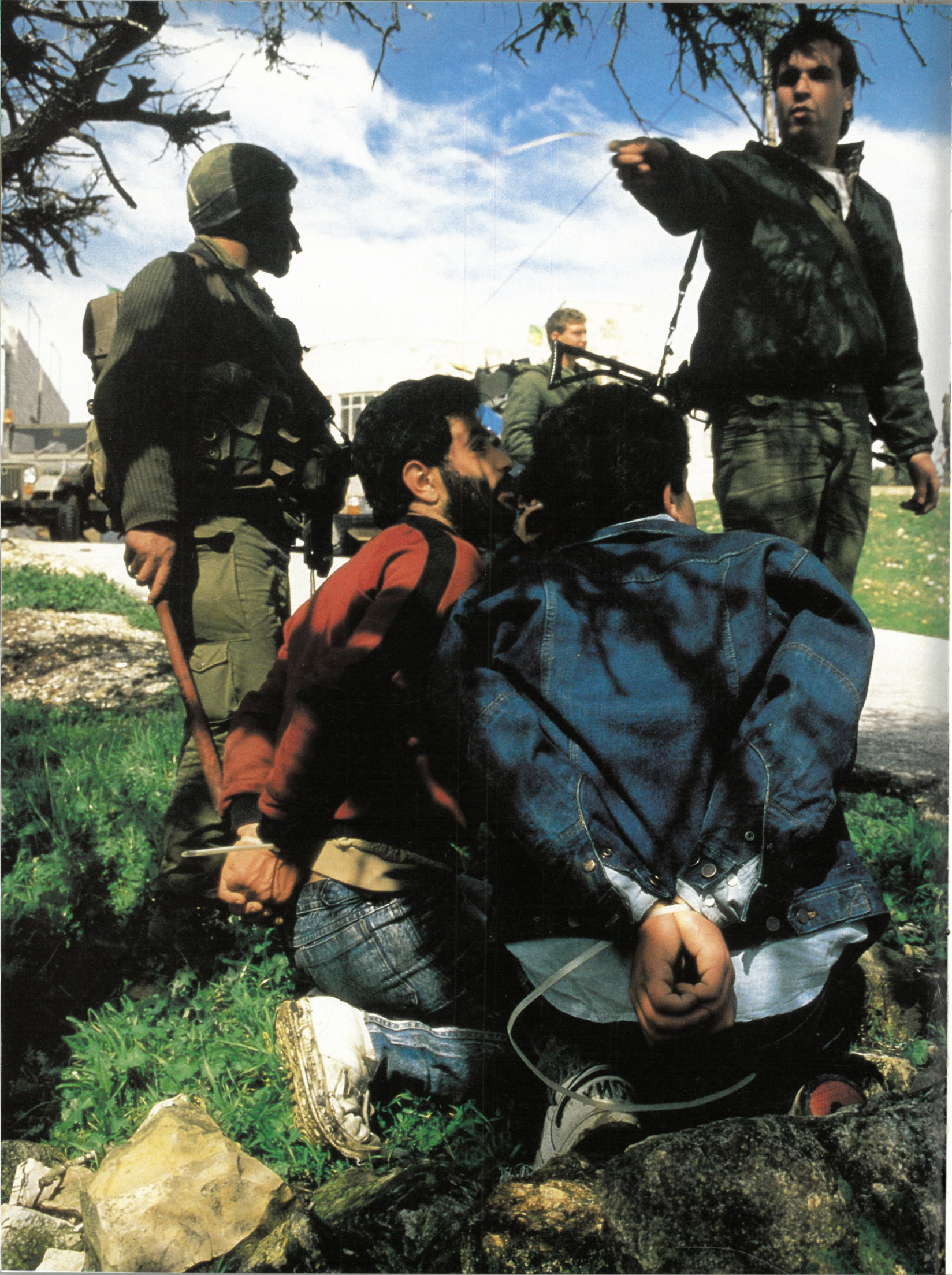
He is one of many Israeli-appointed Palestinian officials who have resigned. Hundreds of policemen, tax-collectors, customs officers, mayors and other bureaucrats have walked out, and hundreds more will follow. The move, ordered by the leadership of the *intifada*, has already played havoc with the Israeli administration of the Occupied Territories, and all Israeli attempts to reverse it -- including the staging of burglaries and other crimes to show the Palestinians how wrong they were to demand the resignation of their police force -- have failed.

Private Faisal Husseini. *He is 47 years old. His weapon is his conviction that there are enough people in the world, Jews and non-Jews, who believe in the sanctity of human rights to make it possible for the Palestinian people to regain their rights by non-violent means. Going by that conviction, Husseini, a member of one of Jerusalem's most prominent families and head of the Arab Studies Center, has had talks with everyone who is ready to listen. He has put the Palestinians' case to representatives of foreign governments and the international media. He has held meetings with Israeli journalists and party officials.*

In July, 1988, Faisal Husseini was dragged out of his home and taken to prison to serve a six-month term on no charges and without trial. His arrest came three days after he had addressed a rally of Israeli *Peace Now* members, making them the offer he had been making for years: peace and justice for everyone, including the Palestinians.

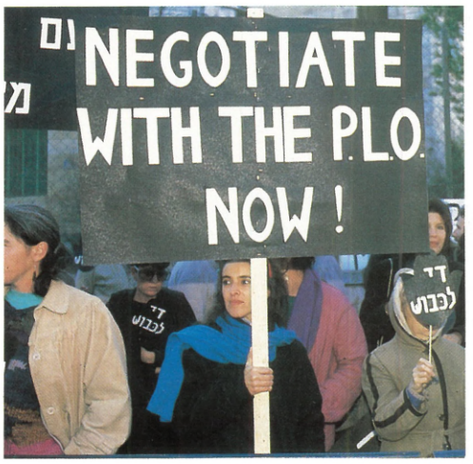
The July arrest was Husseini's third in 15 months. The first six-month, no-charges, no-trial prison term he served went barely noticed by the world. The second and third, however, brought protests from Western governments and Amnesty International, which called Husseini a "prisoner of conscience" and demanded his immediate release. The protests and demands were ignored by the Israeli government, whose indifference to them underscored the message Husseini and his people had been sending the world for several years: It is Israel, not the Palestinians, that is resisting peace, and Israel, not the Palestinians, who is rejecting the non-violent path to a Middle East settlement.

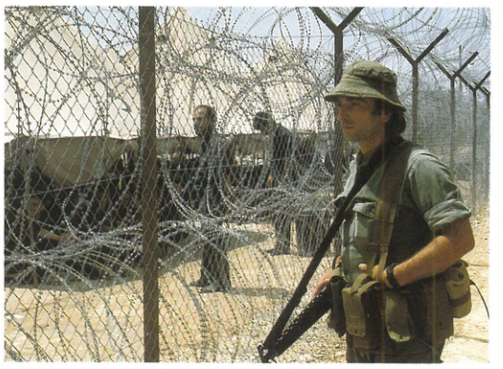
RABIN,
How many Palestinians you have killed this month?



Private Mubarak Awad. *He is 44 years old. Known around the world as "the Palestinian Gandhi," his weapon is his peace proposal. As head of the Palestinian Center for the Study of Non-Violence in East Jerusalem, he is highly vocal in his demand for a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza to live in peace with the state of Israel, and highly persistent in his advocacy of non-violent action by the Palestinians, including civil disobedience, to achieve that goal. In June, 1988, the Israeli authorities decided that because he had acquired the American citizenship, he had no right to stay in his native Jerusalem, although thousands of Israeli Americans were free to live wherever they wished in Jerusalem or any other part of the Occupied Territories. Mubarak Awad was expelled.*

His ideas, however, could not be deported. The principle of civil disobedience that he and others had planted in his homeland bloomed into a rugged branch of the *intifada* as more and more Palestinians refused to pay taxes, carry Israeli identity cards, or use Israeli channels to meet any of their needs.





Private Jad Ishak. *He is 41 years old. His weapon is his education. A biologist who holds an M.A. from Rutgers University in the U.S. and a Ph.D. from the University of East Anglia in the UK, he spent months teaching Palestinians who came to him from miles around how to raise their own food in their backyards, providing them with instructions, seeds, saplings and equipment -- until the Israeli authorities heard about his activities and forced him to "close shop." He was later placed under administrative detention.*

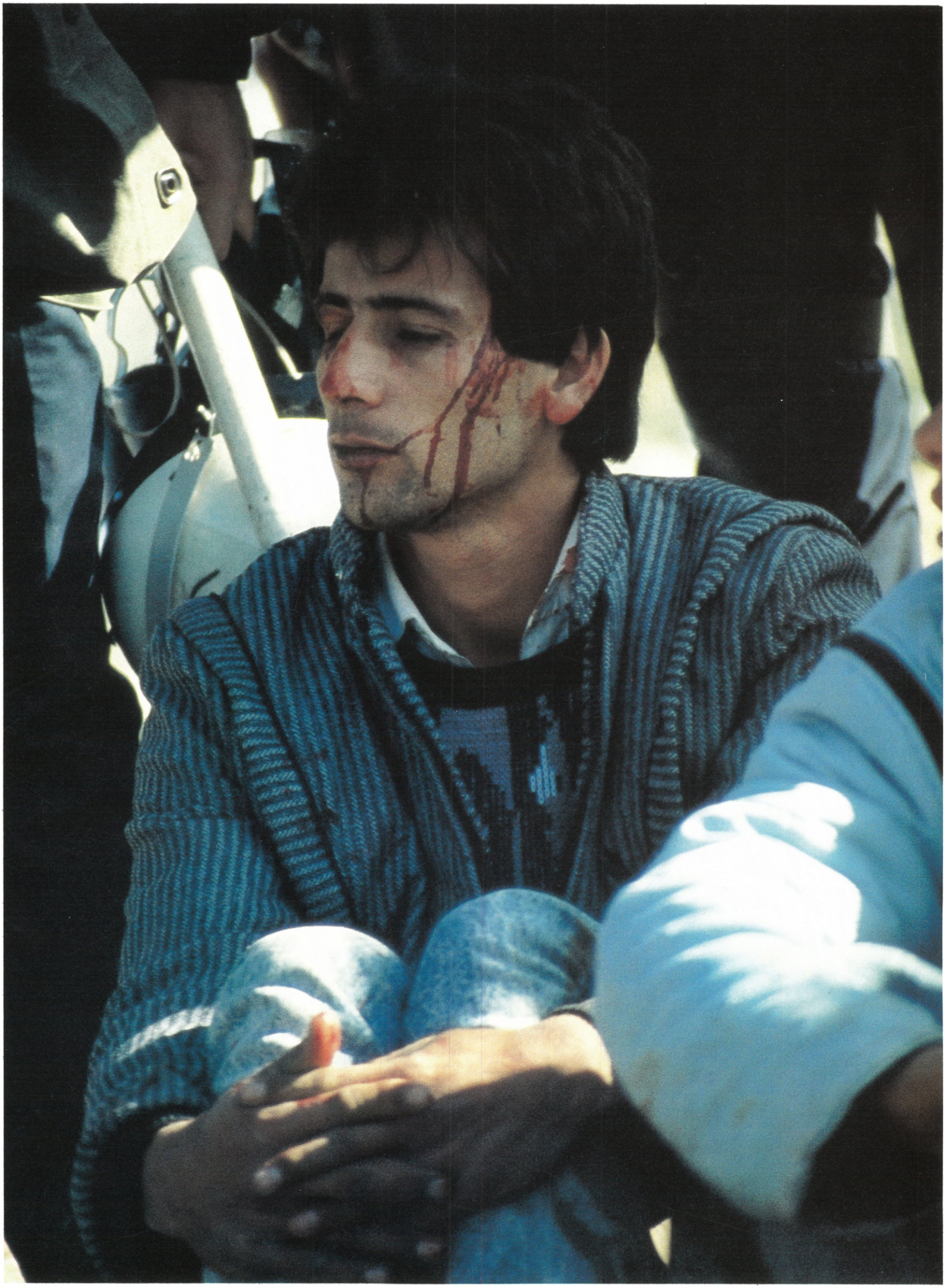
But the knowledge he sowed has taken root, tens of Jad Ishaks are spreading the word, and thousands of homes are turning into clandestine farms, feeding their owners and their neighbors and helping the territories weather the hunger drives the Israelis are mounting.

The self-sufficiency program has expanded beyond agriculture to bite into the industrial and educational leashes the Israelis are using in their attempts to bring the *intifada* to heel.

Cottage industries are mushrooming in the back rooms of village homes, and an underground marketing network has fanned out from them.

Homes are also becoming schools. Village and neighborhood education committees have been formed and classes have been held in living rooms and garages whenever the Israeli authorities have closed schools -- and they have closed them on a regular basis since long before the *intifada* erupted: A UNESCO report published in 1987 found that between 1979 and 1986, six of the Occupied Territories' eight universities lost a total of 1,787 academic days, the equivalent of four calendar years and three months.

The chains that the occupation authorities are using to keep the territories bound to Israel are breaking link by link.



Private Salah Zuhaikah. *His weapon is his pen. He is the editor of* ***ash-Shaab****, an Arabic newspaper published in East Jerusalem. Israeli troops stormed his home on January 14, 1988, wrecked his furniture and dragged him out. No charges were made against him. No trial was scheduled for him. He was informed that he would remain in "administrative detention" for six months, renewable.*

Salah Zuhaikah, a board member of the Arab Journalists' Association, was not the first newsman to be jailed for expressing his views, nor was he the last. The chairman of the Association's board, Radwan Abu-Ayyash, was thrown behind bars the day the *intifada* started, and every day since then has seen some kind of Israeli harassment of the Arabic press in the Occupied Territories, ranging from suspension and closure of publications to the restriction of distribution to the arrest and mistreatment of journalists. In May, 1988, researchers estimated that six percent of the 1,700 Palestinians who were then under administrative detention were journalists and human rights researchers. All the journalists arrested work in Jerusalem, the only occupied Palestinian city where the publication of Arabic newspapers and magazines is allowed -- on the grounds that Jerusalem is Israeli and therefore subject to Israeli laws: every word and picture has to be approved by a military censor before it is published.

Much has been written in the international press about what Israel has done to foreign journalists. The International Federation of Journalists and several national press unions -- including the British, the Swedish and the American -- have sent formal protests to the Israeli authorities about the violence and restrictions to which foreign journalists have been subjected in their attempts to report what is going on in the West Bank and Gaza. Foreign journalists have been beaten and harassed, their equipment has been confiscated and destroyed, their press credentials have been withdrawn, and their movements have come under steadily increasing control.

We regret that the representatives of the world press are receiving such treatment in our land. We hope to make

amends soon, when our land is liberated and we are free to show them the true face of Palestine -- an open, peaceful, friendly, hospitable face untouched by tyranny or racial and religious bigotry.

Until then, we have this to say to them:

What you are suffering now our own journalists have suffered a hundredfold for 20 years.

The Israelis can deny you entry to our camps and towns, but they cannot take away your right to write. They have taken that right away from our journalists.

The Israelis can destroy your cameras, films and notes, but they cannot destroy your newspapers and magazines. Our newspapers and magazines are being destroyed.

The Israelis can bruise you with their rifle butts, but they cannot torture you in the privacy of their interrogation rooms. Our journalists are spending hours of agony in those rooms.

The Israelis can strip you of your press credentials, but they cannot strip you of your freedom. Our journalists are being thrown in jails and concentration camps for months with no charges and no trials.

But then soldiers expect no less from their enemies, and our journalists are our soldiers.

So are our scientists, our plumbers, our teachers, our students, our elders, our children, our mothers and our sisters.

We are our own army and, weaponless, we will fight until we regain our land or are buried in it.

Who are our leaders?

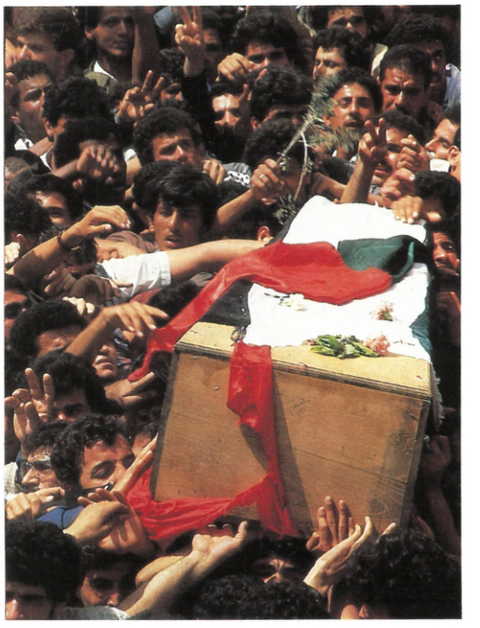
In mid-March, 1988, Israeli soldiers swept through the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, breaking into shops and homes and gathering up "Palestinian activists."

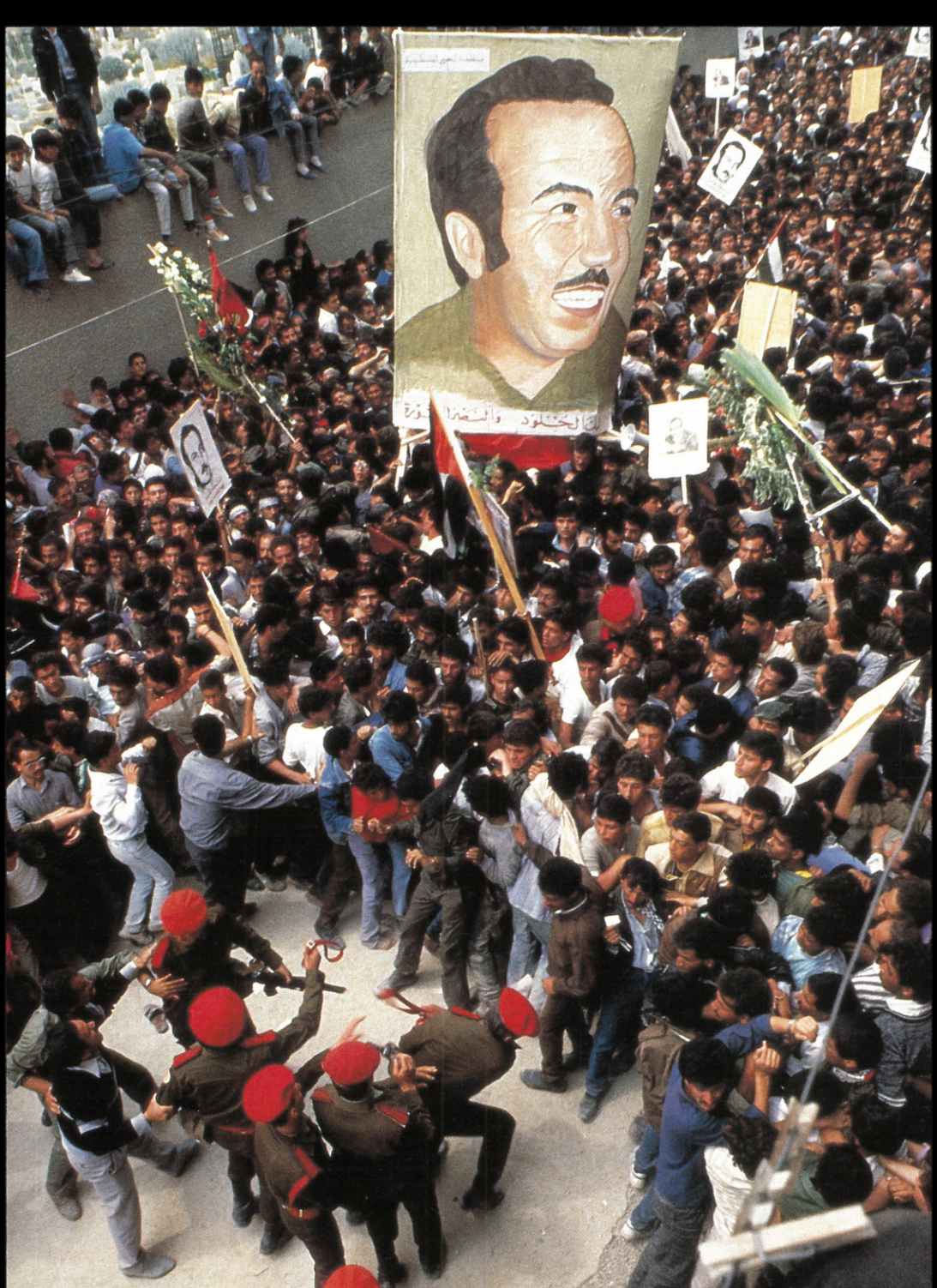
In one week they had 350 Palestinians under "administrative detention" and were announcing that the majority of the *intifada* leaders were out of the picture and the uprising would now lie down and die.

But the uprising stood taller and flourished.

Concluding that they had gone after the wrong people, the Israelis decided that to crush the uprising they must eliminate its extra-territorial leadership. And so, in mid-April, an Israeli hit team broke into the Tunis home of Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad), the Palestine Liberation Organization deputy military commander in charge of the Occupied Territories, murdered him as his wife and children watched, and returned to base with blood-drenched hands and triumphant smiles, certain that the *intifada*, its helm unmanned, would now lose its bearings and run aground.

But the *intifada* sailed on.





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WE WILL
NEVER SUBMIT

If the Israelis have not gotten the message yet, we'll spell it out for them:

Our leaders are invulnerable.

They cannot be confined, because you cannot put a thought in jail.

They cannot be killed, because you cannot assassinate a concept.

They cannot be expelled, because you cannot deport a principle.

Our leaders are ideas, not men.

They are ideas of freedom and dignity and independence.

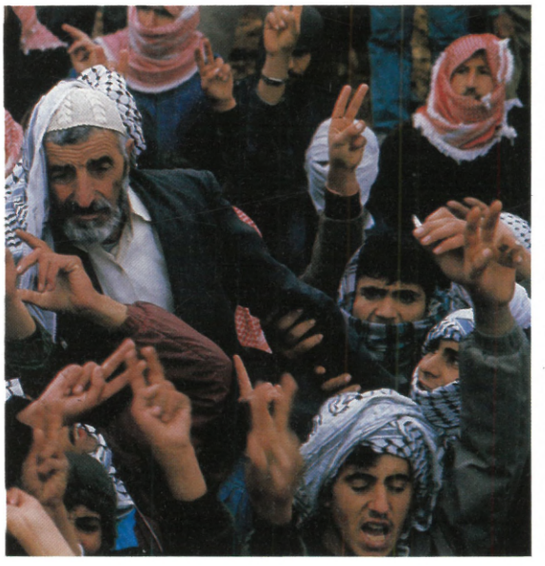
They are ideas sired by persecution and weaned on injustice. More persecution will only stimulate them. More injustice will only reinforce them.

Yes, there is a "Unified National Command of the Uprising," and it is made up of men and women, flesh and blood, that can be hauled to jail, bludgeoned to death and driven into exile.

They are merchants who bleed when you shoot them, writers whose bones crack at the drop of a steel pipe, farmers who cannot walk through iron bars, and clerks who can be piled into trucks and cast out of their homeland.

They have formed committees across our land to chart the day-to-day course of the uprising. They are courageous, committed and determined people whose sacrifices we revere and whose instructions we carry out to the letter.

They are looked up to and obeyed not because of who they are but because of the ideas they embody. They will embody those ideas for as long as they can stay out of Israeli jails and morgues. When the jails and morgues claim them, there will be thousands of men and women waiting in the wings to take their place and carry on the struggle -- equally courageous, committed and determined men and women whom our people will hold in as much respect and obey with as little hesitation, until they too succumb and pass the banner on.



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And yes, there is a Palestine Liberation Organization. It exists in the Occupied Territories, in Israel itself, in the Arab world, in Europe, in Asia and in the Americas. Its program is the program of the Unified National Command of the Uprising. Its goals are the goals of every Palestinian everywhere.

It too is made up of mortals who can be bombed in their camps in South Lebanon, driven out of their offices in Beirut and Washington, and slaughtered in their homes in Tunis.

But bombing them will not devastate the Palestine Liberation Organization, scattering them will not dismantle it, and killing them will not liquidate it.

The Palestine Liberation Organization is not Yaser Arafat or Khalil al-Wazir or Salah Khalaf or George Habash. It is a nation's rebellion against a nightmare of repression and a people's pursuit of the dream of liberty. As long as the nightmare lasts, the rebellion will rage, with or without Yaser Arafat. As long as the dream remains a dream, the pursuit of it will continue, with or without Khalil al-Wazir.

The Palestine Liberation Organization is the symbol of Palestinian nationhood. It is us, the Palestinian people. When the Israelis and the Americans say they will speak to anyone but the Palestine Liberation Organization, they are saying they will speak to no Palestinians but those who renounce their people.

A Palestinian who renounces his people, should such a creature exist, is as Palestinian as Benedict Arnold was American; he can speak for our people as authoritatively as Guy Fawkes could speak for the British; and his commitments will be as binding on us as the commitments of Vidkun Quisling were binding on the people of Norway.

Failure to accept this fact has been the fatal flaw of most of the international Middle East peace initiatives that have been launched so far, including the 1988 peace initiative of U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz. The refusal of the would-be peace-makers to address the Palestine Liberation Organization has been a direct result of their refusal to address the core of the problem: the usurped national rights of the Palestinian people. No one who ignores the problem can produce its solution.

The Palestinian people is one with the Unified National Command of the Uprising, which is one with the Palestine Liberation Organization, which is one with the Palestinians' determination to live in liberty and at peace in their own homeland. To speak to any one of us, you must address us all. To destroy any one of us, you must kill us all.

When will it stop?

Our *intifada* will end tomorrow if, by tomorrow, Israel and its supporters decide that the Palestinians are as human as the Americans, have as much of a claim on basic rights as the Britons, and are as entitled to an independent state as the French.

Harry Smith of Washington, D.C. can be reasonably sure that when he leaves his home tomorrow morning, no one will slam him in jail without charges or any hope of a trial. Ghassan el-Basha of Tulkarem cannot.

John Baker of London is free to speak his mind whenever he pleases, entitled to meet with whomever he chooses, and permitted to apply for any job he wants with a reasonable assurance that he will be on an equal footing with his peers. Mohammad el-Ali of Gaza City is not.

Maurice Monet of Paris has a country in which he can vote, be elected, expect services in return for taxes, and receive papers that identify him as a member of the international community with the right to travel and a home that has to accept him when he returns. Adel Yehya of Nablus does not.

Until they have what Harry and John and Maurice take for granted, Ghassan and Mohammad and Adel would be closer to worms than humans if they did not continue their rebellion.

What the Palestinians want is what almost everyone else in the world has: an independent home of their own in which they can be masters of their fate.

The Palestinians believe that no one who accepts them as human beings could regard their desire to be equal with the rest of humanity as anything but natural.

They are heartened by the millions of people around the world who share this view.

They extend their thanks to the thousands of Western and Eastern governments, organizations and personalities that have come out in support of this view in world forums and the international media.

They express special gratitude to the hundreds of Jews around the world and in Israel who have risked the wrath of their co-religionists by standing up for Palestinian rights.

Those rights, however, continue to be rejected by many in Israel and some in the West who, to justify their rejection, are imputing the Palestinians' quest for human equality to sinister motives and hurling wild and often contradictory accusations at them.

Those accusations could very well be convenient shields behind which those who are making them hope to hide from world judgment and their own conscience, but the Palestinians, always ready to give their challengers the benefit of the doubt, have answered all charges clearly and repeatedly, and we will answer them again:

We have been accused of wanting to throw the Jews into the sea. We do not. All we want to throw into the sea is the half-century of tyranny and subjugation to which we have been subjected.

But so far, the Israelis have been tightening the bureaucratic, military and economic noose around our necks to persuade us to leave our land, and deporting those of us who refuse to be persuaded. If they continue to do this, we cannot but conclude that it is they who want to throw us into the desert, and our *intifada* will continue in self-defense.

PEACE
NOW
תחיל
מו"מ לשלום
PEACE
NOW
BOOST
Cheer Peace

We have been accused of wanting to destroy Israel. We do not. We want to destroy nothing but the international illusion that we are content to spend the rest of our lives as slaves and to condemn our future generations to the same fate.

But Israel has been killing our women and children and filling its concentration camps and our graveyards with any of us who dares to demand his rights. If this goes on, we cannot but conclude that it is Israel that wants to destroy us, and our *intifada* will continue in self-preservation.

We have been accused of demanding the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem as a first step toward claiming pre-1967 Israel. We have no such intention. We want the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem in which to build our independent homeland.

But the Israelis are confiscating more of our land every month, building settlements in it, sending thousands of their citizens to live in them, pouring most of our water into their farms while ours turn to dust, providing them with all the services that we are denied, and giving them weapons and license to shoot any of us whom they consider a threat. As long as this is happening, we cannot but conclude that it is Israel that is not content with the part of Palestine it has already taken and is determined to help itself to our West Bank and Gaza Strip, and our *intifada* will continue for hearth and home.

We have been accused of planning to establish in the West Bank and Gaza Strip a totalitarian state that would pollute the region with toxic ideologies, or a puppet state that would threaten the interests and allies of one or both of the world's superpowers, or a military state that would keep the sword of vengeance suspended over Israel's head. We have no such plan. The state we envisage is a democratic one that would thrive on peaceful relations and free trade with the rest of the world, and would be prepared to set everyone's mind at ease by accepting on its soil a UN force to act as a buffer between it and any of its neighbors.

But Israel, in an apparent attempt to camouflage its land grab, has been proposing a "limited autonomy" that would keep Israeli troops in our heartland, Israeli settlers in possession of our land, and the Palestinian people under the yoke of one or another of their neighbors. If Israel maintains this position, we cannot but conclude that it is over our own heads that the sword is suspended, and the *intifada*, our only shield, will continue.

We have been accused of trying to get by force what we could get by negotiations. The Palestinians, it has been said, reject peaceful talks as a path to a solution of their problem, and few things have been said that are farther from the truth. We are ready for peaceful negotiations as of now. Our leadership is prepared to attend an international peace conference without preconditions. Set the date, name the place, and we will be there.

But the Israelis have rejected negotiations. They want no part of an international peace conference and will not even recognize our representatives. The U.S., Israel's major supporter, has announced a series of preconditions which it says the Palestine Liberation Organization must accept before it qualifies as an interlocutor. Although it is up to us, and not the U.S., to decide who may or may not speak for our people, the Palestine Liberation Organization, bending over backwards to demonstrate its peaceful intentions, has met all American preconditions: It has renounced all violence worldwide, retaining only our natural right to resist the Israeli occupation on our own soil, and it has accepted all UN resolutions relevant to the Palestine Question and the Arab-Israeli dispute, including Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. The Israelis and the Americans, however, continue to dismiss our representatives as "a terrorist organization" with which no negotiations are conceivable. If this attitude continues, we cannot but conclude that neither the Israelis nor their major supporters have any intention of talking to the true representative of our aspirations, and our *intifada*, our most eloquent spokesman, will continue to speak our minds.

Our struggle will end when we have nothing left to struggle for.

We will have nothing left to struggle for when every one of our dispossessed people has laid down his life or regained his rights.

Whether you wish to negotiate with us, as most nations of the East and the West have done, or annihilate us, as Israel has tried to do for the past 40 years, you know who we are and where we live.

We are the Palestinian people.

There are 5.5 million of us.

One million live on the West Bank of the River Jordan.

Six hundred and fifty thousand live in the Gaza Strip.

Seven hundred and fifty thousand live in Israel.

The rest are scattered around the world.

We are a nation robbed of its country, a people stripped of their rights, a civilization that will regain its homeland and take charge of its fate no matter who resists it or how.